



Northeast Regional Video Teleconference: Implementing, Adapting, and Sustaining Model Programs

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Implementation

There are at least two types of barriers to implementation:

- Those that arise from a bad fit between program type and local and organizational conditions
- Those that arise from unanticipated changes, events, and conditions once the program is in place



Implementation

Some programs (based on their design) may pose more implementation challenges than others.



Program Fidelity

Program fidelity is ...the degree of fit between the developer-defined components of a substance abuse prevention program, and its actual implementation in a given organizational or community setting.

(CSAP, 2001, p.4)



What is program adaptation?

Deliberate or accidental modification of a program, including

- Deletions of program components
- Additions of program components
- Modifications to the existing components



Program Fidelity: Context

- Any adaptation to a model prevention program may decrease the likelihood that a program will achieve the same outcomes as the original program.
- The degree of adaptation and/or the significance of the adaptation may decrease the chances of achieving the same outcomes as the original program.



Program Fidelity

There is a greater likelihood of effectiveness when a program retains the core elements of the original intervention including:

- basic program structure
- content
- delivery

(NIDA, 1997)



Capacity-building vs. Adaptation

In general, when contemplating the need for an adaptation, first ask yourself if you can increase your capacity to deliver the program as it is designed.



Prevention Principles

There is a greater likelihood of success if an adaptation does not violate a science-based prevention *principle*.

Example of a prevention principle:

- Peer leaders are an effective prevention delivery method.

Limits of Adaptation

- Science doesn't tell us as much as we would like to know about the degree of risk we can take with regards to adaptation.
- As science-based programs are more widely diffused and adapted in various ways, we will learn more.



Program Fidelity

Where to look for guidance:

- Review the evaluation literature and see if there is information about a similar successful adaptation to a model program as the one you are suggesting.
- Call the program developer and ask their advice.



Program Sustainability

Factors related to the sustainability of programs:

- collaboration between community and your organization
- community ownership
- renewable financial support
- continuous leadership
- positive image in the community
- strong host organization
- strong program advocate(s) or spokesperson(s)



Program Sustainability

Where to look for guidance:

- Contact the program developer for their advice.
- Contact other local organizations that have implemented the same program to learn about factors that may have influenced the sustainability of their initiative.